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09/09/2003 09:28 AM

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cc:
Subject: FW: Plant's soil tests find few pollutants (Coronet)

Ben and John: see last paragraph (implied trust in federal government). Randy

-----Original Message-----

From: One of the Grimms [mailto:Grimmie@toast.net]

Sent: Tuesday, September 09, 2003 6:19 AM

To: Eric; Joe Sekerke; Alan Becker; Dr. David Johnson; Josefa Schlottmann; Prakash Patel;
Bob Safay; Susan Bland; Shaun Crawford; Randy Merchant; Connie Garrett; Beth Copeland;
Lu; Sharon Ketchen; Nancy Malaret; Cicely Brown; Andy Reich

Subject: Plant's soil tests find few pollutants (Coronet)

Plant's soil tests find few pollutants

But some Plant City residents who live near the Coronet phosphate plant aren't convinced by the results.

By TAMARA LUSH, Times Staff Writer

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PLANT CITY - Test results released Monday show that soil near the Coronet Industries plant does not contain dangerous levels of arsenic, lead or boron.

However, health officials said the soil samples show that the plant's air emissions have "some impact" off the company's property, and that additional samples will be taken and studied.

The soil testing for 11 inorganic compounds was conducted by the state Environmental Protection Commission. The tests were part of a multiagency effort to determine whether pollution from Coronet could be sickening nearby residents.

"I didn't see any data in here that alarmed me in any way," said Paul Schipfer of the EPC's waste management division.

The soil samples were taken from 22 sites around the plant; all were from dry land and were collected from between one and three inches below the surface. No samples were taken from residential areas, because officials didn't want to risk getting soil contaminated with fertilizer or pesticides.

According to a report issued Monday, all of the samples are "within standards considered safe for play and daily activities for private residences."

At a recent meeting, residents suggested testing the soil to determine whether air quality affected the area's dirt and groundwater.

Many residents near the Coronet Industries phosphate processing plant are worried about high cancer rates because they live close to the plant and closed landfills. For decades, phosphate



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at the plant has been chemically cooked into an additive for chicken feed.

But in the research conducted so far, officials have found that cancer rates in ZIP codes closest to the plant are on par with the the state average. Also, pollution monitors show that Plant City has better air than Tampa. Authorities are finding unexpected amounts of pollution in drinking-water wells around the plant, but not at levels likely to make people sick.

Tests on 43 wells near the plant found one with elevated levels of arsenic, a cancer-causing metal found in phosphate and pesticides.

Jerry Campbell, of the EPC's air quality group, said Monday that his agency would meet next week with the federal Department of Environmental Protection and the state Department of Health. The officials will discuss further testing of soil, air and water.

The Rev. Johnnie Cooper, one of the concerned Plant City residents, doesn't put much stock in the recent soil sample results. He and others are waiting to see the results from federal environmental tests. "We have already told the federal government that we are not going to accept the local tests," he said. "We don't trust the state of Florida, the county or Plant City."